

## Popular Participation in the Mass

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*The Mass is not only something to be understood; it is also something to be done; it is action; it is drama, and it is something to be done by all. This paper is reprinted from Orate Fratres, September, 1931.*

WE celebrate today our Third Annual Liturgical Day here in the City of St. Cloud. The First Liturgical Day, in 1929, and the Second, in 1930, were held at the Abbey of St. John. As the liturgical movement progresses, we have this time brought our meeting to a larger center of population where a larger number of the laity may take part in it. For the liturgical movement is not something that interests only the clergy and the sisterhoods. Its message extends to all members of the Church. We hope that as years go on and the movement spreads, meetings of this kind will be held in all parts of the country.

The liturgical movement is a great effort to interest all Catholics in the liturgy of the Church, that is, to bring about a better understanding by all of the public worship of the Church and a more active and complete participation in it.

By the liturgy of the Church we mean her public worship, the offering of the holy sacrifice of the Mass, the administration of the sacraments, and all the official blessings and public prayers of the Church.

The central and chief thing in all the liturgy is the holy sacrifice of the Mass; and that is the subject for our consideration in this first conference today. We might perhaps equally well begin with the subject of Baptism, for Baptism is that sacrament which makes us Christians, children of God and members of the Church. Baptism gives us first of all that higher life of sanctifying grace which we exercise and nourish and increase in the holy sacrifice of the Mass and by all the means of grace that are given to us in the liturgy.

But granting that we know the meaning of Baptism, it is plain that, once we are baptized, our entire life as Chris-

tians revolves about the holy Eucharist. It is in the holy Eucharist especially that our divine Lord abides in us and we in Him. It is in the holy sacrifice of the Mass especially that our Lord continues to do among men to the end of time His life-work of human redemption. And He does that work not only *for* us, but *in* us and *with* us. It is in the holy sacrifice especially that we carry out His bidding: "Do this in commemoration of Me."

Catholic people generally are very faithful about assisting at Mass on Sundays. But it is also a well known fact that many of them assist at Mass in a careless way, without a good understanding of the service and without taking active part in it. The liturgical movement aims to correct these defects. It hopes to bring about a reform, so that our people will not be "mute spectators" at Mass (as Pope Pius XI has said) but will take an intelligent and active part in it.

This morning we celebrated a "Missa Recitata," that is, the Mass recited aloud with the united participation of the entire community. When the Mass is sung or chanted we call it High Mass or "Missa Cantata"; and so when it is recited aloud we call it "Missa Recitata." Here is a practical illustration of what the liturgical movement wishes to do. We want not only instruction, but action also. The Mass is not only something to be understood; it is also something to be done; it is action, it is drama, and it is something to be done by all.

In what way then do we wish our Catholic people to assist at Mass? What is the ideal that the liturgical movement proposes? Let me say at once that the improvement which we desire is not something that can come all at once or in a short time. It will require instruction and practice. And we shall do well to begin with the children in our schools.

First of all it is important that our people become accustomed to use the Church's own Mass-prayers, that is, the prayers of the Missal. The number of those who are doing this is growing constantly and rapidly from day to day. The Missal is now published in handy form and at a low price. The most convenient form of it for beginners is *The Leaflet Missal* which supplies a separate leaflet for every Sunday with all the Mass-prayers just as they are

said by the priest at the altar. Our first desire then is that all Catholics may gradually come to use the Missal and to follow silently the prayers as said by the priest at the altar.

But once you know the Missal, you will quickly realize that the Mass-prayers are not intended to be read all in silence. The Mass is a public prayer, it is a community drama, and some of its words are intended to be read or recite or chanted aloud.

Hence, when we wish to do full justice to the Mass we celebrate it not as Low Mass but as High Mass. In ancient times High Mass was the rule and Low Mass was the exception. The liturgical movement hopes that the time will come when the entire congregation will be prepared to take part in the chanting of the High Mass. Indeed, our children are already being trained to do so. In the meantime it is not so difficult to introduce the public recitation of the Mass, or the "Missa Recitata." This is now being done in many places, and we hope to hear reports this morning from priests and sisters who can tell of the good results that have been attained in this way.

The Mass is the great sacrificial prayer of Christ and His Church which unites heaven and earth, in which our praise ascends to God and God's blessing descends upon us. Christ our Lord is the High Priest of all mankind. He is both God and man, the link between heaven and earth, and all who are baptized in Christ share in some degree in His priesthood and have their part in His great sacrificial prayer.

We have a High Priest who hath ascended into the heavens; who hath an everlasting priesthood, whereby He is able to save forever those that come to God by Him, always living to make intercession for us (Heb. 8, 1; 7, 24).

He who during His lifetime in Palestine offered to His Father the service of a perfect life and consummated it by His sacrificial death on the cross of Calvary, continues forever that heavenly sacrifice which St. John describes in the Apocalypse, and continues also on earth the same sacrifice in union with us in the holy Mass. We offer our sacrifice on earth in union with the sacrifice in heaven. Therefore in the Canon of the Mass we pray that our offerings may be borne aloft unto God's altar above before the face of His divine majesty. And in the Preface we declare that we

offer the Mass in union with the angels and archangels, the cherubim and the seraphim, and with the whole host of the heavenly army, saying: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts; heaven and earth are full of Thy Glory.

The eternal sacrifice in heaven is the great united prayer of all the blessed above, and our sacrifice on the earth should likewise be our united chorus of prayer, not merely the work and action of the priest alone while the people assist as "mute spectators," but a sacred community drama in which all members of the Church take part both inwardly and outwardly according to their rank and circumstances.

How, in particular, should this be done? The participation of the people in the Mass-drama should be both outward and inward. By outward participation I mean participation in its outward words and actions. By inward participation I mean that of the mind and heart, and in this regard I shall dwell briefly on three chief points: the living of the liturgical year through the proper part of the Mass, union with Christ in the sacrifice-oblation, and union with Christ in the sacrifice-banquet.

### I. PARTICIPATION IN WORDS AND ACTIONS

Actually a large number of Catholics know very little about the words and ceremonies of the Mass, although it is our principal act of divine worship. We come to Mass in a feeling of obligation Sunday after Sunday, but what do we do there? We know in a general way that Mass is the renewal of our Lord's great sacrifice of Calvary, but we cannot well explain its words and ceremonies; we leave these to the priest at the altar. Protestants have no sacrificial service; but such service as they have, at least they understand it and follow it intelligently. Many Catholics simply say what prayers they please during Mass, and often few or none at all. Each one prays by himself and does not feel that he is taking part in one united public prayer. We are united at Mass in the sense that we are for the time being under one roof. We know indeed that somehow a solemn and sacred action is taking place; we know that the Mass is something different from an afternoon and evening service. But there is certainly room and there is great need for a

better detailed understanding of the Mass and for a closer participation in it by all the people; so that our sacrifice here on earth may resemble the united prayer of the blessed in heaven.

Now, our "Missa Recitata" this morning shows us the beginning of a better way. Here the Mass has been celebrated aloud and in unison, that is, in a public way, as the united prayer and action of the whole Christian assembly. You will have observed that not all parts of the Mass have been recited aloud, and those parts that have been recited aloud have been distributed between the priest and the congregation.

What part of the Mass-prayers should the people say? If you mean by this question: what parts should they say in any way, either silently or aloud, then the answer is that they may read silently or repeat silently by heart all of the prayers, including those that are intended especially for the priest. The Mass is the prayer of all, the prayer of Christ in His mystical body, the Church, and what the priest prays he prays in the name of all. Hence all may follow him in silent reading or in silent repetition of what they know by heart. You will notice that the Mass-prayers are nearly all in the plural number.

But when we celebrate the "Missa Recitata," the Mass recited aloud, it is important to know what parts must still be said silently, and how the parts spoken aloud are to be distributed. For, although we are all actors in the Mass-drama, we are not all actors in the same degree. Thus certain parts belong to the priest and are not to be recited or chanted aloud by anyone else.

The words *Dominus vobiscum* are the priest's greeting to the people. Evidently these words belong to the priest. And it is equally evident that the reply, *Et cum spiritu tuo*, belongs to all the people. Thus we may say in the first place that the congregation should recite aloud and in unison the responses to the words which the priest addresses to all. Ordinarily we leave these responses to the Mass-server, and at High Mass to a special choir. But according to the ancient custom of the early Church, and according to the very nature of the case, these responses belong to the entire congregation, and our Supreme Pontiff, Pope Pius XI, has urged us to restore the ancient custom.

Next, there are certain parts of the Mass-text besides the responses which naturally belong to the congregation and which in ancient times were recited and chanted by all. These are the Kyrie, the Gloria, the Credo, the Sanctus and the Agnus Dei. The wording of these parts is always the same and therefore all can easily know them by heart. In modern times we have left these parts of a special choir because most of us are either not trained in music at all or are not acquainted with Church music. We have now begun to remedy the situation, and good progress has already been made in the training of our children to sing the Mass.

The chant or recitation of these parts of the Mass-text by the entire congregation will restore among us a sense of solidarity that has to a large extent been lost. We will regain that feeling of unity which was so pronounced among the faithful of the ancient Church. We will come to feel once more that we are one body in Christ, and this will greatly increase the power of all our Catholic social action.

However, the ideal of congregational chant does not imply that we shall do away with our special choirs. For there are certain parts of the Mass-text which belong to the choir and not to the entire congregation. These are the Introit, the Gradual, the Offertory chant and the Communion chant. These have a different wording and melody from Sunday to Sunday or from day to day. Hence they cannot be rendered by the congregation and will always require a special group of singers.

It is hardly necessary to point out that certain parts of the Mass-text belong especially to the priest. Some of these he speaks silently and others he recites or chants aloud. These are his appointed parts in the Mass-drama as the special minister of God and are not to be recited or chanted aloud by the choir or the congregation. But since the priest speaks and acts in the name of all and nearly always uses the plural number, it is right that all should follow his words silently by reading in their books or by listening to what the priest utters aloud.

Besides the words of the Mass there are also its actions. What have the people to do with these? They should know their meaning, for the actions of the Mass are a dramatic language, and in some measure they should take part in them. They should know when to kneel or to stand or to

sit, and they should know the meaning of these different attitudes. And some of the actions of the priest should also be performed by the people, such as the bowing of the head, the genuflection during the Credo, the striking of the breast, the sign of the cross at the Gospel and at the Blessing. In all these attitudes and actions there should be intelligence and devotion. These things should be done with reverence and in unison. Certain actions of the priest which the people do not actually repeat outwardly, should still be understood by them and should be followed with the eye and at heart; such are the Lavabo, the Incensing, the Elevations, the Breaking of the Bread.

Heretofore many of the faithful had used prayer-books which furnish what are called "Devotions for Mass." The official Mass-book, the Missal, gives us the best devotion for Mass. Instead of reading a "prayer at the Gospel" why not read the Gospel itself; instead of reading a "prayer at the Offertory" or a "prayer during the Canon" why not pray with the Church, that is, with Christ in His mystical body? When our Lord instituted the eucharistic sacrifice of the Last Supper He said: "Do *this* in commemoration of Me." He did not say: "Do whatever you please." The words and actions prescribed by the Church in the Missal are the Church's official understanding of what our Lord meant when He said: "Do *this* in commemoration of Me."

## II. INWARD PARTICIPATION IN THE MASS

What we have said so far regards the outward words and actions of the Mass. It should be unnecessary to point out that mere outward participation is not enough. It is not enough to honor God with our lips only, while our hearts are far from Him. Actually it is very necessary to insist on this point. For there is a constant danger of becoming mechanical in our devotional practices and of doing things by mere outward routine.

The words of the Mass should be studied and meditated so that they will become the groundwork of our daily life. Then when we celebrate the Mass we shall give united public expression to the thoughts and purposes that are always with us as the substance of our spiritual life. The prayers at the foot of the altar must be a real preparation

of our mind and heart for the drama of the holy Sacrifice. The Kyrie should express our real longing for the graces of redemption which were brought to mankind in the Incarnation and which are continually poured out upon us in the Mass. The Gloria should be an ardent song of joy in honor of the Word made flesh, once long ago in Bethlehem and day by day in the holy sacrifice of the Mass. The Epistle and Gospel should keep us always mindful of the life and teachings of our Lord and hold us continually in vital union with Him.

(1) Mention of the Epistle and Gospel brings us to the subject of the *Liturgical Year*, the system of seasons and feasts in which year after year we review the life of our Lord and find in Him our way of life. This system of the liturgical year it set forth in the proper or variable parts of the Mass, and notably in the Epistles and Gospels. Understanding of the liturgical year is an important part of the whole plan of popular participation in the Mass. All Catholics are to some extent acquainted with the principal feasts and seasons, such as Advent, Christmas, Lent, Holy Week, Easter and Pentecost. But only those who use the Missal and who study the proper parts of the Mass can appreciate the true and full significance of the liturgical year. No doubt it will take time and effort to bring this knowledge to all the people, but for that very reason we must set seriously to work. Mention may be made here of just one helpful book, Dom Haering's little volume, *Living With the Church*. And we may express the hope that sometime we may have in this country the equivalent of the popular instructions on the liturgical year that have been produced in Austria by Dr. Pius Parsch.

To those who really understand the liturgical year, its feasts and seasons are not mere commemorations. Christmas is the birthday of our Lord, but not merely in the sense that February 22 is the birthday of Washington. In the feasts of the Church we actually experience, or we should experience, the events which we commemorate. Since the Church is the mystical Christ, the life of the Church is the continuation of the life of Christ. Thus in the liturgical year the events of our Lord's life are not merely commemorated as events of the past. They are the actual experiences of our present life in Christ. Christ is



born again in us, He labors and suffers in us, He dies and rises again, and the whole process of His divine work of human redemption goes on year after year in His mystical life in the Church.

(2) The life-work of our Lord which is set forth in the proper parts of the Mass is concentrated in the ordinary or the unchanging parts, and especially in the sacrificial service, or, as we say, the Mass of the Faithful. Nothing is more important than that all the faithful know how to *participate inwardly in the holy Sacrifice*, first in the sacrifice-oblation, and secondly in the sacrifice-banquet. Here above all there should be a true and deep understanding of the words of the Mass. Here is the interchange of gifts between heaven and earth. Here God is honored and mankind hallowed "through Christ our Lord."

(a) Do our Catholic people generally understand how they ought to *participate inwardly in the sacrifice-oblation* of the Mass? Let me answer by pointing out certain deficiencies. First that of those who seem to have an inadequate idea of what we mean when we say that the Mass is a sacrifice. To them the Mass seems to mean simply the real presence of Christ. Their attention is entirely absorbed by the *fact* that He is present and they hardly consider the *reason* why He is present, namely that He may renew the offering of Himself in union with us. They like to have the Blessed Sacrament exposed during Mass and to have Benediction after Mass, as though the purpose of the Mass was simply adoration of our Lord: There is failure here to recognize the meaning of sacrifice, and therefore also failure to participate in it.

Again, there are those who do indeed grasp the truth that the Mass means the offering of sacrifice, but who regard it as Christ's sacrifice without seeming to understand that it is also theirs. They assist at Mass not so much by active participation in the offering of it but rather in a passive way as recipients of the fruits of Christ's sacrifice which they ask for themselves and for their friends and for the faithful departed.

Now, the ideal which the liturgical movement proposes is that of active participation in the holy Sacrifice, that is, the participation of all the faithful as active co-offerers with Christ. Our divine High Priest offers the Mass not only *for*

us but *with* us. His offering of His life on Calvary was a sacrifice of infinite value and sufficient for all time. The very reason why He renews His sacrifice in the Mass is that it may also be ours in union with Him, ours not only in its fruits but in the offering of it.

The sacrifice of our Lord on Calvary was the consummation of His entire life of self-sacrifice, that is of His lifelong offering of self, of all His words and works and sufferings from Bethlehem to Calvary. He renews this sacrifice in the Mass so that we may strive constantly to offer ourselves in like manner, and that our self-offering may be ennobled and perfected in union with His.

Active participation of all the faithful means therefore that each one of us must come to the Mass not merely as passive recipients but as active givers, offering in union with our Lord the homage and devotion and service of our daily life, all our purposes and efforts, our endurances and abnegations. These we bring to the altar, represented outwardly by our gifts of bread and wine, so that as the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ we ourselves may be embraced as victims in His great sacrifice.

Such is the teaching of the official Mass-prayers if we will read them attentively and study and meditate them. Such is the main thought that runs all through the prayers of the Offertory and Canon of the Mass.

(b) When we thoroughly understand what is thus meant by active participation in the offering of the sacrifice-oblation we will see plainly the inevitable consequence of *participation in the sacrifice-banquet*. The words of the Canon-prayer after the Consecration declare as an understood thing that the offering of the sacrifice by all the faithful implies the receiving by all of its fruits in holy Communion. And the wording of the Postcommunion prayers implies the same.

It is evident enough that many Catholics do not yet understand that complete participation in the Mass includes the partaking of the body and blood of the Lord. Nevertheless this is the ideal which the Mass-prayers propose and which has been urged insistently by Pope Pius X. And happily we are witnesses of the continued progress toward that ideal ever since the pronouncements of this revered

Pontiff, the restoration of the practices of the ancient Church in obedience to the words of our Lord: "Take ye and eat; drink ye all of this; do this in commemoration of Me."

It should be observed that the ideal of Pope Pius X, which is that of the liturgical movement, had better be stated not simply as the ideal of frequent Communion, but as that of Communion as frequent as the Mass, that is, holy Communion should be understood as participation in the Mass and should normally be as frequent as our assistance at Mass. Owing to an imperfect comprehension of the words of Pius X, communicants have sometimes shown a disposition to disassociate holy Communion from the Mass as though it were a separate and private devotion. Hence it is important that holy Communion be received at the proper time during Mass unless for reasons of real necessity. In proportion as we again come to understand the Mass well the right practice will become well established.

In the Gospel narrative our Lord uses the figure of a banquet to illustrate our union with God in the beatific life of heaven. And He instituted the eucharistic banquet of the Mass as the means by which we may attain to that in heaven. We desire, as we say, to obtain the fruits of the Mass. Is not the fruit of the Mass Christ Himself, the source of all grace? Does not St. Peter tell us that in Christ God has given us those great and precious promises by which we are made partakers of the divine nature? And the words of St. John which we repeat so often in the last Gospel may well be understood of the sacrifice-banquet of the Mass: "As many as received Him, He gave them power to be made the sons of God."

Moreover, the eucharistic banquet by its very nature is meant for all. Holy Communion is not simply a private devotion, the union of the individual soul with Christ. Whether in heaven or on earth, the divine banquet is the union of many made one in Christ. The purpose of holy Communion is not only the sanctification of the individual soul but the perfecting of the whole mystical body of Christ. It is the outward and efficacious sign of the unity of the Church, the bond of charity and membership in Christ. "For we being many," says St. Paul, "are one body—all that partake of the one bread."

Active participation of all the faithful in the holy sacrifice of the Mass, both in offering and in receiving, is the plain teaching of the official Mass-prayers if we will but study them. Let me cite but one more example from the Missal: "Grant, O Lord, that with our offering of bread and wine upon the altar we may unite the sacrifice of perfect love in our hearts; and that by our earnest effort to do good to others we may gain for ourselves a share in Thy everlasting mercy" (Secret of the Mass of St. Paulinus, June 22).

As we study this prayer we will observe: (1) that the words are in the plural and are therefore the words of all the faithful on the lips of the priest; (2) that the prayer speaks both of offering and receiving on the part of all; (3) that the offering is said to be ours, that is, the offering of all made one in that of Christ; (4) that the offering is both the outward one of bread and wine and the inward one of perfect love; (5) that in return for this our gift to God we ask for a share, each one of us, in the gift of His everlasting mercy; (6) that we ask for this gift of divine love in proportion to our love for our brethren in Christ.

## The Catholic Woman in Modern Life

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*During Commencement Week at the College of the Sacred Heart, Manhattanville, New York City, the following baccalaureate sermon was preached by the Rector of Our Lady of Lourdes Church.*

"Thus saith the Lord: Stand ye on the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, which is the good way, and walk ye in it: and you shall find rest to your souls." (Jeremiah VI. 16.)

THESE words so simple, gentle, and comforting, yet dire with hidden warning and menace are seemingly as harmless ashes, yet conceal angry fires able and ready to burst into destructive flames. They were spoken into unheeding ears on the rugged peaks of Judea by the meek and peaceloving Jeremiah to be reechoed six-hundred years later by Christ, the Prophet's prototype, meek and humble of heart, on the plain of Galilee, as He thundered His malediction on Capharnaum and the unbelievers of all time. The commination is identical. Those who, lured by worldly prosperity, had strayed from the old paths, the good way of obedience to the unchanging laws of Jehovah, had been scourged with the flail of disaster, devastation, fruits of heartless wars. Prosperous Capharnaum with Corozain and Bethsaida, all on the "way of the sea," would so be dragged to sheol that not even their ruins on the shores of the great lake of Galilee can to-day with any certainty be identified. The striking part of both episodes is the identity of promised reward: Christ and Jeremiah hold as the supreme inducement for steadfastness in the old paths—"you shall find rest for your souls."

To-day a world, shocked and shattered by the greatest cataclysm in recorded history, in every department of its life, domestic, social, political, intellectual, religious, betray-

ing the fierce energy and restlessness of the physical atom, is vainly seeking the equilibrium of rest, of peace to soul, to prevent it from crumbling into anarchic disorganization. But the worldings of to-day like the Jews of Jeremiah's time and their descendants in that of the Messiah, will not heed the counsel and command of the Lord: "Stand ye on the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, which is the good way, and walk ye in it." As a result we have abortive conferences, suspicions, distrust among nations, extirpation of all religion, abandonment of any standards of morality, denial of the very existence or need of a Jehovah. Place or name is indifferent. Bolshevism is practically as rampant, though less brutal, in society which still calls itself Christian, as it is on the steppes of Russia. The family is tottering, undermined by sensuality, selfishness, comfort, pleasure. From the same causes social life is engaged in a *danse macabre* whose restlessness as it seeks new and still newer sensations can only lead to destruction. The political state, abandoning the old ways of honor, uprightness, high-minded patriotism, seeking only aggrandizement, has embarked upon a restless sea of policies that have brought the blight of radical Communism near us. In commerce and industry restlessness issuing in overproduction through overmechanization has ruthlessly cast aside all standards of charity, honesty, humanity. In the midst of all this turmoil the individual, permeated with the mania for motion, is bewildered as he sees crumbling to nothingness what in childhood he had been taught to consider the necessary bulwarks of organized society. Caught in the giddy whirl of environment, it is hard for him to hear the words of Messiah and Prophet; difficult to apprehend which are the old paths, to find the good way. But oh, how he longs to find rest for his soul!

Is not rest with motion an attribute of divinity? Is not God the first moving cause, everlasting motion, yet the embodiment of rest? "Who," sings the Psalmist, yearning for rest, for surcease of sorrow, of trial, of trouble, "who will give me the wings of a dove, that I may fly and be at rest?" From Exodus to Apocalypse the promise of rest is held out as the greatest reward God can bestow. *Requiem aeternam*—eternal rest is the boon desiderated for the dead who die in the Lord.

You, my dear young friends, live in an epoch whose dominant characteristic, not unjustifiably, may be termed restlessness. Motion mechanically has almost annihilated space. Almost, too, has it brought to our unglorified bodies that agility which is a property of the glorified life. But the craze for speed is an externalization of the mental attitude so common amongst us to-day. The cry for change, continual change, is our substitute for the *quid novi* of the Athenian agora. In your brief scholastic life you have, doubtless, noted changes that a few years ago would have seemed impossible of accomplishment. Philosophies that reigned when your academic career began, are now quite forgotten. Scientific theories accepted then as indisputable dogmas have passed into the discard, into which almost daily their successors are following them. Notions of ethics that would have been shocking before the World War are now complacently accepted and acted upon. Textual Biblical criticism has been superseded by total rejection of Scripture as the word of God. Fashions in thought are as swiftly changing as fashions in dress. But through all the frenzy of motion, physical, social, intellectual, ethical, and religious, the solemn words of Israel's austere prophet ring down the corridors of time, and to a world gone mad in its restlessness and desire for change, come the pleading, soothing words: "Be steadfast in the old ways and ye shall find rest to your souls."

What those old ways are has been the burden of your teaching, training, discipline within these walls, sacred to the religion of the Divine Promiser of rest with its implication of happiness. The prayers of your devoted mistresses will follow you earnestly and watchfully as in a few days you cross this threshold and step forth into the awful freedom of individual life, embedded in a world for which the Great Consoler would not pray. You are to be in it but not of it. Your presence here, every minute of your life here, is a proclamation that you have taken His yoke upon you as the necessary condition of rest and consequent happiness. It may not be amiss, then, to consider briefly what for you the imposition of that yoke implies.

I need not speak to you, I am sure, of the duties incumbent upon the humblest Catholic believer. You are among the elite. The special and precious advantages you

have enjoyed as students of this favored Catholic college impose very high responsibilities, for responsibilities are proportionate to privileges. It is written: "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required."

Realization of your dignity as Catholic women is your first objective; and that truly embraces everything asked of you. For you are not merely human beings. The Spirit of God, whose brooding over primeval waters brought forth life, infused into you, as the lustral waters of Baptism cleansed your souls, that supernatural life by which through your human nature you were mysteriously united to the Godhead, and became members, or more emphatically still, limbs of the Mystical Body of the Son of God which we call His Church. Now, as the humblest member of our physical bodies reacts upon our whole being, as the slightest infection in any tiny cell will affect the entire system, so our actions, good or evil, concern the corporate Church of which we are a part and of which Christ is Head. Your responsibilities are, therefore, of tremendous consequence not to you alone, but, by reason of the Communion of Saints, to all that Mystical Body dwelling in heaven and purgatory as well as on earth. This is the doctrine that St. Paul continually teaches: "I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me." In her liturgy the Church reiterates it constantly. Daily at every Mass her priests recall it: "O God, who in a marvellous manner didst create and ennoble human nature, and still more marvellously hast renewed it, grant that by the mystical union of this water and wine, we may be made participators of His divinity who vouchsafed to become a participator of our humanity, Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord." And in the Preface of the Ascension, recalling the vision of the Apostles gazing upon their Master going up into heaven, she tells us He was lifted up "so that He might make us participators, sharers of His Godhead," as He placed "at the right hand of God's glory the substance of our frail human nature which He had taken to Himself." In the great prayer of St. Thomas Aquinas by which the priest prepares himself to offer the sublime Sacrifice are found these words of tremendous import to all who participate in that Sacrifice: "Grant me, I pray, to receive not only the Sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood, but also the reality and the power of the Sacra-



ment. . . . Grant me so to receive the Body of Thy sole-begotten, which He derived from the Virgin Mary, that I may be enabled to be incorporated into His Mystical Body, and to be co-reckoned into the number of His limbs."

The Catholic woman, therefore, thus divinized, should heed St. Augustine's plea and recognize her stupendous dignity. In recognizing it as she recalls the tragedy of the Israelites who hearkened not to the Prophet's warning, as she surveys the ruins of proud Capharnaum, or rehearses in her own experience the catastrophe of women who, bred in the faith and educated as herself, have been similarly heedless of the admonition, she will see the wisdom of remaining steadfast in the old ways if she wishes to find rest for her soul, and willingly bend her neck to the yoke of Him who has promised that it will be sweet and its burden light because His merciful love renders it so.

The restlessness that has followed upon the accession of women to complete independence and the possession of a freedom, dangerous unless rightly used, has found expression especially and unerringly in the assaults upon those age long institutions which peculiarly safeguard the Catholic woman—I refer to the divergence from the old ways in the matter of marriage and of education. Financial, economic, industrial, political changes lead men into paths new, indeed, but not necessarily ending in destruction. But social changes, the outcome of pernicious principles, inevitably seek to undermine these two bulwarks of Christian society. They are the peculiar sphere of women, who are not only the mothers of the human race but its real educators. Confronted with these two factors in life, I would warn you young Catholic women to realize practically your sacred dignity as Christ's members, co-partners, and to be alive to the fact that as such you are not free in your choice, but your choice must be conditioned by your membership in the Mystical Body of Christ. Your choice not only affects your individual selves but the entire assembly of the faithful. Like Rachel, our Holy Mother is constantly lamenting and deploring her children because they are not—lost because her very flesh and bone have deliberately chosen to abandon the old ways, to endanger their steadfastness by contracting marriages that usually mean ruin, or by offering their children to the Moloch of Godless education for

social or worldly advantage. If our Catholic young women could only be brought to realize that in abandoning in these as in many other matters of importance the old paths marked out by Catholic teaching, they are not only working their own irreparable ruin but inflicting incalculable sacrilege and outrage upon Christ Himself, we might be spared the many scandals in Catholic high life that both shock and sadden us.

It is in these two spheres where woman is practically supreme that the taint of worldliness betrays itself. The world from Eden to the end of time has been and will be the great enemy of steadfastness in the old ways immutably established by God. Its appeal is through sensuality, through love of power, through the pageantry of the passing show. "All these will I give Thee if falling down Thou wilt adore me." The Catholic soul recognizes the folly, the flattery, the futility of that appeal. But it requires the wisdom of the Son of God to utter the denial, "Satan, begone!" That her children may possess such wisdom, the Church prays incessantly that they may be safely guided through earthly changes, have their hearts fixed constantly there where alone are true joys; all in harmony with St. Paul's cry to us who have risen with Christ and therefore have become incorporated with Him who is first born of many brethren. "If you have risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God." Such is the prayer of the Mass at which you are assisting, namely, "that we may so pass through things temporal that we finally lose not the things eternal."

You will tell me, my dear friends, that this is a high doctrine and who can bear it? May I remind you that such was the reaction to the words spoken by Jesus Christ when He began the revelation at once of the mystery that was to nourish His Divine Life in our souls and at the same time the Sacrament that was to enable us to live? One of the many defects in our American Catholic life is the lack of high spiritual outlook, the failure to cultivate the higher spiritual life. We are a practical people. Our environment leads us to the cultivation of the material rather than the ideal. It is not so long ago, though before your time, that Leo XIII called attention to Americanism—that is, the exaltation of the active above the contemplative life,

the discrimination shown by the distinction alleged between the active and passive virtues. Despite denials that spirit still dwells amongst us. It can be killed only when we realize in our lives our incardination with Christ. Despite the frightful defections in those countries now miscalled Catholic, we must confess to an exuberant effervescence in them of the higher spirituality. American Catholic religious literature is pitifully meager, although signs of considerable advance are not wanting. The Saints in the calendar of the North American Church thus far are properly of European origin and training.

To what must we look for support in our following of the old ways? Pius X, of saintly memory, gave one practical but sure direction. The Christian spirit will depend upon the active participation of the Faithful in the liturgy. It is, indeed, the Mass that matters, not the Mass as an obligatory act, but the Mass intelligently comprehended and lovingly embraced. To have our lives day by day as they awaken to consciousness in the early dawn before taking up the duty each day should bring—to have them, I say, steeped in the Precious Blood that, reddening the Wood of the Cross, wrought the salvation of men; to offer sacrifice for living and dead, praying that it may be accepted in the odor of sweetness for the whole world of men; to be nourished in the rosy flush of morning with that Sacrament of which the Church prays: "Grant, O Lord, that what we have taken with our mouth, we may receive with a pure mind; and that from a temporal gift it may become for us an eternal remedy;" and again, "May Thy Body, O Lord, which I have received, and thy Blood; which I have drunk, cleave to my heart, and grant that no stain of sin may remain in me, whom these pure and holy Sacraments have refreshed"—this is the sure way to continue "*in Christ*," and so to remain steadfast in and loyal to the old paths.

This is the table that the Lord hath prepared to give us the nourishment needed to strengthen us against our triple enemy—world, flesh, devil.

Oh, my young friends, if when, at the lesser elevation in the daily Mass, we with the priest offer to God *omnis honor et gloria*, that supreme doxology and sublime act of homage, we would only penetrate deeply into the meaning of those

words, "By means of Him, and along with Him, and in Him, Thou *hast*, Almighty Father, together with the Holy Ghost, all honor and glory," and understand that Christ in us and we literally in Him are actually paying the greatest possible homage to God, what strength would come to our nodding hearts, tottering and well-nigh crumbling to despair in our efforts to remain steadfast in the old paths, those hearts which the Church prays God to direct so that they may not be misled by false fingerposts luring to ways more attractive to our frail human nature. While celebrating the loveliness of the Feast of the Body of Christ, Corpus Christi, with St. Thomas we sang splendidly in the Divine Office:

Dedit fragilibus corporis ferculum;  
Dedit et tristibus sanguinis poculum.

(He gave the Bread of the strong, and the strong wine of His Blood to fragile anxious human creatures.)

Through that Sacrament and that alone, you can grow up to the stature of Christ, and so remain steadfast in the old paths.

For inspiration you have the example and protection of her, the Mother of fair love whom we call *Mater Admirabilis*. Ofttimes in your academic life have you sung her praises. Recall often in your future life those mellifluous chants, those lovely processions in her honor in which you have figured, and your hearts will keep as unsullied as the white robes you then wore as symbols of your innocence and purity, while your feet will keep true to the old paths which then were new and sweet to you. She, my own dear Lady of Lourdes, will keep you faithful to the Sacred Heart of her Son, thus realizing what the story of Lourdes records, *per Mariam ad Jesum*. So be it to you, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.